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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
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AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
USINT BAGHDAD

S E C R E T PARIS 22345

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MASS, EAID, PEPR, FR, SO
SUBJ: SIAD BARRE VISIT TO FRANCE

1. ON JULY 13 WEDISCUSSED SIAD BARRE'S JULY 11-12 VISIT TO PARIS WITH ELYSEE AFRICAN ADVISOR, RENE JOURNIAC. JOURNIAC SAID THAT THERE WERE FEW SURPRISES IN WHAT SIAD HAD TO SAY. HE HAD EXPOUNDED TO PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING THE FAMILIAR ARGUMENT THAT SOMALIA IS THE VICTIM OF A CONCERTED RUSSIAN PLOT TO EXERT CONTROL OVER THE RED SEA AREA AND EVENTUALLY TO ENCIRCLE SAUDI ARABIA AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE EVENTS IN THE PDRY AND AFGHANISTAN. THIS WAS ACCOMPANIED BY EXHORTATIONS ON THE NEED OF WESTERN SUPPORT FOR SOMALIA TO COUNTER SOVIET AIMS. A NEW TWIST TO SIAD'S PRE-
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SENTATION WAS THE CONTENTION THAT THE SOVIETS ARE NEAR AGREEMENT WITH THE ERITREAN PEOPLES LIBERATION FORCES TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF AN INDEPENDENT MARXIST STATE IN ERITREA WHICH WOULD BE A SOVIET CLIENT IN THE PATTERN OF ANGOLA. JOURNIAC SAID THAT HE HAD FOUND THIS POINT OF THE PRESENTATION INTERESTING BUT IMPLAUSIBLE. AMONG OTHER REASONS FOR SKEPTICISM, THE

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SOVIETS HAVING BADLY MISCALCULATED THE STRENGTH OF NATIONALIST FEELINGS IN EARLIER DEALINGS WITH SOMALIA ARE HARDLY LIKELY TO MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE IN DEALING WITH ETHIOPIA. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE WAS SOME TRUTH IN WHAT SIAD HAD TO SAY ABOUT APPARENTLY UNCHECKED GROWTH OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN THE AREA.

2. SIAD BARRE TOLD THE FRENCH THAT HE WOULD BE TRAVELING TO IRAQ AFTER FRANCE TO CONSULT WITH IRAQI LEADERS WHO HE MAINTAINED, HAVE BEEN MARKED AS THE NEXT SOVIET VICTIMS IN THE PLOT TO ENCIRCLE SAUDI ARABIA.

3. ON THE SUBJECT OF WHAT SIAD BARRE HAD ASKED FROM FRANCE, JOURNIAC SAID THAT HE HAD COME EQUIPPED WITH AN EXTENSIVE LIST OF DEMANDS FOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE. ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE FRANCE WILL DO SOMETHING AFTER SIAD'S REQUESTS HAVE BEEN STUDIED IN MORE DETAIL. SIAD'S REQUESTS ON THE MILITARY SIDE HAD BEEN TYPICALLY EXTENSIVE--IN EFFECT ENOUGHTO RE-EQUIP EIGHT DIVISIONS. THE FRENCH HAD TAKEN THE LIST AND SAID THEY WOULD EXAMINE IT. WHEN THEY ASKED WHO MIGHT PAY FOR ALL THIS EQUIPMENT EVEN IF IT WERE AVAILABLE, SIAD HAD REPLIED THAT THERE WAS NO PROBLEM; THE SAUDIS HAVE AGREED TO PICK UP THE TAB FOR WHATEVER SOMALIA CAN OBTAIN. JOURNIAC SAID THAT

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IT WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION THAT FRANCE WOULD PROVIDE ANYTHING BUT DEFENSIVE ARMS UNTIL THE SITUATION IN THE AREA RETURNS TO A SEMBLANCE OF PEACE AND NORMALITY. COMMENT: THE IMPLICATION WAS THAT FRANCE WOULD RESPOND CAUTIOUSLY BUT POSITIVELY WITH AN OFFER OF SOME DEFENSIVE WEAPONS EVEN BEFORE PEACE RETURNS TO THE OGADEN. END COMMENT.

4. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION JOURNIAC SAID THAT SIAD BARRE HAD NOT EVEN HINTED AT THE POSSIBILITY OF A TURNING TO THE SOVIETS IF HE DID NOT RECEIVE SATISFACTION IN THE WEST. "THERE WAS NOT EVEN A WHIFF OF BLACKMAIL."
HARTMAN

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